Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."
JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

Judge Almy of Cambridge, Mass., lately fined twelve young men five dollars each for standing on a corner. Who now will fine Judge Almy for sitting on a bench?

Actual investigation shows that more outrages are committed by Americans upon Chinese than by the latter upon the former. It is also clearly shown that, while the Americans have no decent excuse for their barbarities, the Chinese generally act under great provocation. Yet these facts will not deter the brutal and lying newspapers from claiming all the virtues for the Americans and condemning the Chinese as inhuman fiends unfit to live.

Both in England and in France the State Socialists have suffered serious reverses. In England they went down with the Liberals, Laborites, and Radicals, while in France the rebuke seems to have been specially meant for them. According to the Paris correspondent of the London "Times," "in more than fourteen hundred elections they carried only twelve seats," and their defeat was "more crushing than the most sanguine of their opponents ventured to expect." State Socialism is on the increase only in Germany, where an absurd modern tyrant is breeding revolt by persistent attempts to rehabilitate feudal principles. There the Social-Democratic party will continue to attract progressive elements, not because of the character of its economic platform, but on account of its general opposition to the government.

The "Evening Post" "cannot understand" the analysis of Anarchist nature which a French writer, M. Hamon, has made on the strength of data yielded by a sort of census of French Anarchists. Such characteristics as "love of revolt" and "love of self" the "Post" admits as natural to Anarchists, but it demurs when M. Hamon goes further and says that Anarchists are distinguished for love of others, tender-heartedness, a powerful feeling of justice, a keen sense for logic, and a thirst for knowledge. I can understand the "Post's" difficulty. Men possessing such characteristics come very near being the salt of the earth,—it would be impossible to bestow higher praise on any class of men than by crediting them with the above qualities,—while the Anarchists have always been painted in the "Post" as the scum or dregs of humanity. If M. Hamon is right, what becomes of the "Post's" representations?

Describing the parade of forty thousand veterans in Louisville streets, a Republican pension advocate says that it doubts whether any body, no matter how intrepid, would have cared "to stand up and audibly characterize the surviving members of the Grand Army as a gang of bounty-jumpers, bummers, and pension grabbers," since the experiment would have been decidedly unsafe. Does this prove that the charge would not be true? Would it be safe to tell bummers that they are bummers, or thieves that they are thieves? Since when has truth depended on "safety" alone?

The "new trades-unionism" (which is simply another name for State Socialism) seems to have received a serious set-back at the recent labor congress at Cardiff. First the congress voted to exclude all who were not genuine workmen, or who had ceased to follow their trades, which step was deliberately directed against delegates specially identified with the collectivist movement. Then the congress voted down a resolution censuring a certain committee for lack of zeal and energy in carrying out last year's State Socialistic manifesto. The old and conservative unions were determined to crush the new unionism, and they seem to have succeeded so far as the congress was concerned. Liberty does not wish to overestimate the importance of this State Socialistic defeat, and there is nothing to tempt it to do so. The old methods of the unions are inadequate, and the agitation may go on forever without accomplishing any substantial reforms in industrial relations. Sooner or later the unions will have to choose between the State and freedom, and, if their present rejection of State Socialism does not signify increased appreciation of freedom, they cannot be congratulated upon their action. The change may belong to that class of political "revolutions" which, as it were, has neither beginning or end, neither adequate cause or lasting consequences.

Our English friend, J. Armsden, has an article on George, Spencer, and the land question in the "Westminster Review" for September. (By the way, why is it omitted from the table of contents on the cover?) It leaves a good deal to be desired in point of clearness and force, but it is valuable on account of its emphasis of the distinction between economic rent and monopolistic rent, and for its criticisms of the single tax. Mr. Armsden's attempt to defend Spencer against the charge of inconsistency is unsuccessful, and his statement that Spencer has "somewhat unconsciously indicated" the true solution of the land question is manifestly incorrect. The true solution, according to Mr. Armsden's own position, is occupancy and use, while Spencer has never retracted his "abstract" proposition that equity does not permit private property in land, and that communal ownership alone harmonizes with the requirements of absolute ethics. Since, then, Spencer still holds that absolute ethics enjoins communal ownership and the payment of rent to the State (which is the original position as taken in "Social Statics"), and since, from the standpoint of relative ethics, he declares himself constrained to prefer the existing system to the various reforms proposed, where has he "unconsciously indicated" the true solution? I may add that Mr. Armsden expresses his conviction that under freedom economic rent would tend to disappear altogether, and that he points out the need of financial reform along Anarchistic lines as a condition precedent to the satisfactory settlement of the question of individual land tenure.

Mr. J. H. Levy, in an interview dealing with the recent elections, told the reporter that the present unpopularity of individualism in England is due to the unfortunate superficial resemblances between it and the individualisms of the Property and Liberty League and of Herbert Spencer. The ordinary man, he said, confounds these kinds of individualism with the genuine article, and condemns the latter for vices which it does not share. "Liberty and Property League individualism means privilege, while Spencer's individualism is unsatisfactory because on the land, woman suffrage, and population questions Spencer is an apostle of despair." Doubtless there is some truth in this explanation, although I cannot see the alleged "despair" in Spencer's views of woman suffrage and population. The population question, he thinks, tends to settle itself under normal conditions, while on the question of woman suffrage he simply refrains from expressing a decided opinion. As long as government is as meddlesome and mischievous as it is, woman suffrage, he believes, would be reactionary, since it would make for aggression instead of for individualism. If there is any despair in this view, the facts are responsible for it, for every unbiassed observer who has an insight into politics thoroughly agrees with Spencer on this point. As a matter of fact, there is nothing strange or disheartening in this feminine faith in authority. As beginners the error is natural in them, but under favorable conditions they will outgrow it. Under freedom women will have the same political rights as men. They will be members of voluntary associations, they will sit as jurors, and they will be treated politically as the equals of men.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

A Socialist Paradise Founded on Usury.

Mr. Bliss's letter, elsewhere appearing, is divided into two parts, the first being a defence of his "voluntary Socialism through the State" against certain criticisms of mine, and the second a general indictment of Philosophical Anarchism. The second part would not have been written, had not Mr. Bliss congratulated himself on the completeness of his success in the first, for his tone is that of a triumphant combatant eager for further opportunity to exhibit his skill. Let us, therefore, attend to the special question before proceeding to deal with the general.

I am glad that Mr. Bliss fully agrees with me that no plan can be "voluntary" if it contemplates compulsory taxation. Being in favor of voluntary Socialism, Mr. Bliss begins by rejecting every element of compulsion. Not only would he allow perfect freedom of competition, but he would *start* his Socialism (I use this term throughout in Mr. Bliss's sense) under conditions of freedom. Very well; I admit that the plan is "voluntary," but it is emphatically *not* "Socialism *through the State.*" In my criticism of the plan I distinctly argued that, "if Mr. Bliss means to tax only those who consent to be taxed and who freely give their capital to the State for industrial purposes," his plan "is not 'Socialism through the State,' but voluntary coöperation among individuals, for within the limits of these activities the State has abolished itself by abandoning compulsion, and become a voluntary association." This argument applies to the case of doing business on borrowed capital under competitive conditions as it does to the raising of the capital by voluntary contributions. Surely Mr. Bliss must perceive that, so far as the industrial functions are concerned, the State would be acting, not as a State, but as a purely voluntary business corporation. It is true that its other compulsory features would remain, but these would be, according to the hypothesis, totally unrelated to the new functions, and hence the logical way to describe the plan would be to call it "voluntary Socialism through the same body that, in another aspect and capacity, acts as a State." Mr. Bliss does not ask the State *as such* to undertake the new functions; he asks it to act as a private corporation would, without the privileges and advantages which it ordinarily claims.

This is not a quibble, Mr. Bliss, but an important distinction. Within the new territory the State acts, not as a State, but as a voluntary business association. The only reason Mr. Bliss has for preferring the State to any other body is, I presume, the assumed superiority of the former in respect of organization, efficiency, and experience. What, indeed, is the State but a certain number of officials, and why could not Mr. Bliss realize his plan through an equal number of "other" business men? Manifestly, he does not think anybody but the State would prove capable enough to perform the great task of emancipating humanity and abolishing poverty with borrowed capital paying interest at the present legal rate.

And this brings me to the next point. Granting that Mr. Bliss proposes voluntary Socialism, does he offer anything feasible and substantial? To answer this, we must recall his definition of Socialism. "Coöperative colonies, huge stock companies, etc., . . . are certainly not Socialism," he says; "Socialism is the ownership and conduct of industry by the community organized." Ownership and conduct of tramways and water or gas works by municipalities is not Socialism, but an insignificant installment of the same; Socialism is the ownership and conduct of "industries"—all, or most, industries—by the organized community, for nothing short of this will abolish poverty and wage-slavery and the other evils of the present system.

So, then, Mr. Bliss's proposition is this,—that the State should issue bonds and borrow sufficient capital to *duplicate* at least most of the industries of the country and, by offering better terms to labor and superior goods to consumers, entice both labor and custom away from our present innumerable private companies. Is it necessary, is it possible, to treat this proposition seriously? Is there any such amount of capital in existence? And, if there were, could the ends to which Socialism is the means be attained in the way indicated? No matter how slowly and gradually the State carried out this process of duplicating existing industries, would there be any advantage to labor in it, seeing that out of the *profits* both the principal and the *interest* would have to be paid? What, pray, is the Socialist case against the existing order? The workman, all Socialists hold, is compelled to accept less than his natural wages, the capitalist class improperly abstracting a part of his product in the shape of interest and profit. As long as interest and profit persist, robbery of labor is inevitable. Now, to establish an industrial order under which labor would reap its full product, Mr. Bliss proposes to borrow capital and duplicate our present industries, expecting to make profits so enormous as to be able to pay out of them, not only the current rate of interest, but installments of the principal! Can he, under such circumstances, pay labor more than the market rate? Yet, if he does not improve the condition of labor, there is no "Socialism" in his plan.

As I have remarked above, it is utterly impossible to discuss with any degree of patience such a "Socialistic" plan. Mr. Bliss commends to me the study of fact; what sort of acquaintance can he have with the actualities of the industrial world who proposes to obtain sufficient capital in the market to duplicate our industries and, in open competition with these, reap such profits as would enable him to pay both principal and interest out of them? And what acquaintance with the facts of the Socialistic movement and history can he have who proposes to abolish poverty and solve the exploitation problem under an industrial system based on usury?

We are asked to study the wonderful results of the "municipal Socialism" of Glasgow, Birmingham, and other English cities. Doubtless the facts in the case are far from furnishing any justification for the extravagant claims made for them by the Socialists; but at all events, as Mr. Bliss admits, there is nothing voluntary about the Socialism of these cities, and, if their industrial enterprises have not caused any increase of taxation, they have probably imposed heavier burdens on the citizens in their capacity of consumers by exacting higher rates for services than those which free competition would establish. I should be glad to have some light on this subject from our English friends; doubtless they would a tale unfold which would impress Mr. Bliss with the need of discriminating between facts and facts. The point, however, I wish to emphasize is that the experience of the cities named is utterly irrelevant to Mr. Bliss's argument; they do not illustrate the possibilities of voluntary Socialism because they are neither Socialistic or voluntary. They do not pay labor the full natural wages and have done nothing toward the abolition of poverty or the solution of the social question, in the first place, and they do not allow free competition of private enterprise with themselves, in the second. Whether they are better administered than our municipalities or not, or whether they render better services than private companies do elsewhere, are interesting questions, no doubt; but what in the world have these things to do with a plan for the establishment of a Socialistic industrial order?

I fancy we are now in a position to deal with Mr. Bliss's general arraignment of Philosophical Anarchism. He charges us with begging the question by defining the State as the embodiment of the invasive principle, and declares that, as a matter of fact, the State is a great force which society is teaching us how to use for liberty. Unfortunately, this lacks the support of logic and fact alike. If Mr. Bliss had borne our premises in mind, he would not have accused us of assuming the conclusion. Our major premise is that every violation of equal freedom is an invasion, and that any body or institution which is inconsistent with equal freedom is an embodiment of the invasive principle and ought to be abolished. Inasmuch as even Mr. Bliss admits that the State violates equal freedom in a thousand ways, and fundamentally by its compulsory taxation of the non-invasive,—which is our minor premise,—it follows that the State is an invasive institution, the embodiment of the invasive principle. Because we seek to abolish all invasion

and enforce equal freedom, we are bound to abolish the State.

But the State, Mr. Bliss says, is being used more and more by society in the interest of liberty. Which refers, I presume, to the protection against other invaders than itself which is afforded by the State. But a highwayman who should, after plundering us to his heart's content, undertake to protect us against other less powerful highwaymen, would hardly be regarded as a great power for liberty, especially if the question under consideration were the desirability of protection against *all* highwaymen. Is the invasion of the State essential to the protection it affords? Can we not secure the protection needed without any invasion at all? Whatever the State may relinquish without committing suicide, even Mr. Bliss will admit that to relinquish compulsory taxation would mean to sign its death-warrant. Now, the abandonment of compulsory taxation is precisely what we insist on; why, then, is it fallacious for us to talk about abolishing the State?

Mr. Bliss gives us no definition of the State, and hence I do not know what he means by the remark that it may some day become voluntary. The State can never become voluntary; all the facts and all the theories join in pronouncing Mr. Bliss's statement self-contradictory. The State will die and be superseded by voluntary social organization, but it will never become voluntary, because compulsion can never become freedom. Mr. Bliss probably uses the term State as synonymous with social organization, and means to say that some day compulsory organization will give place to voluntary organization. He has a right to his definition, but he cannot deny that it is peculiar to himself, and that writers generally have used the term in the sense of a *compulsory* organization. Those who defend the State defend *compulsion*, not organization, while those who attack the State attack, not organization, but compulsion. Mr. Bliss ought to study facts more.

Defining the term State as we do, we clearly cannot talk about the "evolution of the State out of tyranny to freedom," but we can and do talk about the evolution of *society* out of tyranny to freedom, such evolution necessarily implying the gradual decay and disappearance of the State. Again, defining the State as we do, we cannot accept the dictum that its abolition will lead to the triumph of individual despots, for the abolition of *compulsory* organization in no wise implies the abolition of *voluntary* organization for defence against *all* despots and bullies. Mr. Bliss has read Anarchistic literature too much to fall into the absurd error of attributing to us the notion that *all* organization, even voluntary, is evil, and the caution in his last sentence that the abolition of compulsory organization—the State—would lead to the reign of the bully was either carelessly written in forgetfulness of our real position, or else must be interpreted to mean that, in his opinion, voluntary organization for protection would be inadequate, and that only the compulsory organization of the State can properly protect us from the tyranny of private aggressors. This interpretation, however, would convict Mr. Bliss of a serious self-contradiction, for he has himself, in the sentence next preceding the last, expressed his own belief that the "path to individual freedom lies through the evolution of the State . . . to freedom." Now, when that day comes, what is to prevent the bully from attempting to enslave men,—what, if not voluntary organization for defence? After all, then, Mr. Bliss himself believes in the possibility of protection without compulsion, of voluntary organization in place of the State. In criticising us he criticises himself. Perhaps that accounts for his triumphant tone.

V. Y.

Justice Brewer's Radical Reforms.

Justice Brewer's remarkable address to the American Bar Association has startled the legal profession and caused a number of editors to make another exhibition of their ignorance and inconsistency. One half of Justice Brewer's speech was as refreshing in its radicalism as the other was disappointing in its short-sighted conservatism. The poor editors, finding themselves greatly perplexed by the attitude of such a distinguished authority and pillar of legalism as a judge of the national supreme court, blunderingly applauded some of the very doctrines they have been persistently fighting as malignantly revolutionary. The lawyers, more logical and settled in their opinions, have consistently disapproved nearly everything that was really valuable in Justice Brewer's address.

The justice's subject was the need of a better education for the legal profession. He deplored the fact that so many unfit and dishonorable men are allowed to disgrace and abuse the noblest of pursuits, and urged the necessity of elevating the profession by excluding all but the most fit. He would make it more difficult to obtain degrees or licenses, and prevent overcrowding by restricting opportunities. It is hardly necessary to say that a majority of the editors are heartily in favor of *these* suggestions. Provided incompetence in their own field is left free, they see nothing objectionable in attempts to regulate all other professions by stringent legislation. The right of editors to be ignorant and irresponsible they would stoutly uphold, for this right is the bulwark of American newspaperdom, but measures regulative of other professions are always sure of their support. As a matter of fact, of course, the intelligent adherent of regulation clearly perceives that it is far more dangerous to the community to be constantly poisoned by reckless editors than to be occasionally victimized by unfit lawyers or architects or physicians. If we are to have examinations, licenses, and supervision, let us, by all means, begin by applying the reform to editors.

It is not my intention here to combat the proposition of Justice Brewer with reference to the hedging about of the legal profession. The cry of restriction is not unfamiliar, and the plan is not an untried one. I am concerned with the second half of his address, which deals with the present state of the administration of justice. He is alive to most of the abuses which are leading men of affairs to virtually boycott courts and lawyers as far as possible, and recognizes the imperative need of radical changes. Tardy and expensive justice, he says, is often gross injustice, and the delays and appeals and jugglery are exhausting the patience and means of clients. He would expedite the process of the law, and make justice prompt, cheap, and certain. How? Here are his suggestions, and their revolutionary character is obvious even to laymen.

> Shorten the time of process. Curtail the right of continuances. When once a case has been commenced, deny to every other court the right to interfere or take jurisdiction of any matter that can be brought by either party into the pending litigation. Limit the right of review. Terminate all review in one appellate court. Reverse the rule of decision in appellate courts, and, instead of assuming that injury was done if error is shown, require the party complaining of a judgment or decree to show affirmatively, not merely that some error was committed in the trial court, but also that, if that error had not been committed, the result must necessarily have been different.
>
> In criminal cases there should be no appeal. I say it with reluctance, but the truth is that you can trust a jury to do justice to the accused with more safety than you can an appellate court to secure protection to the public by the speedy punishment of a criminal. To guard against any possible wrong to an accused, a board of review and pardons might be created with power to set aside a conviction or reduce the punishment, if on the full record it appears, not that a technical error has been committed, but that the defendant is not guilty or has been excessively punished.

Setting forth his reasons for the proposed subordination of courts to juries, Justice Brewer says:

> The idea of home rule and local self-government is growing in favor. Thoughtful men more and more see that the wise thing is to cast upon each community full responsibility for the management of its local affairs, and that the great danger to free government is in the centralization of power. Is it not in the line with this thought that, as far as possible, the final settlement of all controversies which are in themselves local shall be by the immediate friends and neighbors of the litigants? Was not that the underlying thought of the jury as first established? And, while we boast that the jury system is the great bulwark of our liberties, are we not in danger of undermining its strength and impairing its influence by the freedom of appeals? Is not the implication therein that the jury and the trial judge cannot be trusted, and is not the sense of responsibility taken away from both when they understand that, no matter what they may decide, some superior and supposed wiser tribunal is going to review their decisions and correct whatever of mistake they may make?

In view of the fact that the decisions of the supreme court are properly regarded by unbiased historians as the most powerful agency among those which have "built up this nation" and wiped out State rights, it is rather significant to find a justice of this tribunal exalting decentralization and advocating a reversion to home rule. And what will the detractors of the jury system say about the plea for greater faith in juries? Some of them have actually endorsed it, forgetting their fulminations of the day before, while others are at a loss to account for this strange self-abasement of a distinguished judge.

From a libertarian point of view, it is to be observed that, while Justice Brewer's suggestions are excellent as far as they go, it is necessary to supplement them, in order to achieve the good results expected, by other judicial reforms, chief of which is the restoration of the power of the jury to veto laws and modify them in accordance with circumstances. It is also important to have juries truly representative of the entire community. Without these conditions, greater power to juries may tend to produce evils far greater than those which it is sought to eliminate.

The American Bar Association has frowned

upon Justice Brewer's audacious progressiveness, and his protest will receive little sympathy from lawyers generally. Manifestly it is impossible to prevent law from committing suicide, and radicals will not make any desperate efforts to save it. But it is a pleasure to note the conversion of a legal light to the view of reason and common sense. V. Y.

What is Property?

A peculiarity of the controversy that has arisen in these columns over maternal rights is the theological temper in which most of my critics approach the subject. There seems to be a sort of ill-suppressed rage at the thought that I should dare to utter such shocking sentiments in behalf of the rights of mothers. Mr. Matter is surprised, Mr. Gilmour and Mr. Fisher are considerably startled, and, as for Mr. Badcock, he simply cannot contain himself. Up to the advent of Mr. Lloyd, whose letter is the last that I have received, Mr. Byington alone seemed to have preserved his equanimity and to be willing to discuss the matter on a purely rational basis, without insinuation or apparent suspicion that I was no longer possessed of the most ordinary instincts of humanity. Which is passing strange. For, if my Congregationalist friend Byington had angrily told me that my views are an invention of the devil and can be held only by a man who is either stony-hearted or a coward, such an assault upon my personality would have seemed to me quite in keeping with the theology which he professes, but I confess I did not expect to be thus pilloried by my Egoistic friend Badcock. However, let it not be supposed that it is my intention to protest against these epithets. Will Mr. Badcock and the rest please consider, from this out, that I am a fiend incarnate, with an alligator hide and a craven soul? The admission of this fact makes it unnecessary to further discuss it, and the space thus saved can be devoted, with more profit, to the argument proper. The question, then, is, not whether the editor of Liberty is sensitive or callous, courageous or cowardly, man or demon, but whether a mother is the rightful owner of her infant child, and as such may do with it as she will; and I must ask my critics to confine themselves to the question.

The ground thus cleared, I may now reason with Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Matter, and Mr. Badcock, in so far as they appeal to reason. Mr. Lloyd's argument is that certain rules of conduct are conducive to happiness and therefore expedient; that Anarchists view equal liberty as the principal of these expedient rules; and that an Anarchist consequently has no right to invade any individual, and hence has no right to invade a child. I might, if it were necessary, disprove here, in a direct manner, the proposition that an Anarchist has no right to invade any individual. But this is needless. I have only to call Mr. Lloyd's attention to the fact that we are discussing the question, not of what an Anarchist has a right to do, but of what a mother has a right to do. Apparently he has forgotten for the moment that not all mothers are Anarchists. I remind him, then, that some mothers, and even a vast majority of mothers, are Archists and do not consider equal liberty expedient. They consider authority expedient and the right rule of conduct in the nature of things; and, hence, by Mr. Lloyd's own argument, they are not called upon, so far as any right in the nature of things is concerned (and this is the sort of right to which Mr. Lloyd refers), to refrain from invading anybody. Now, as I do not suppose that Mr. Lloyd means to countenance the absurdity of denying absolute control of children to Anarchist mothers while allowing it to Archist mothers, he must, in order to prove his case, establish that it is the duty, not simply of Anarchists, but of every person, to refrain from invasion. Which he cannot do, because, while basing his own duty in this respect upon his own view of expediency, he cannot refuse to allow others to make their opposite views of expediency the basis of a right to invade. I am far from denying that there is a reality in this matter of expediency, independent of individual opinion; but it is a long way from this admission to the affirmation that a man is in duty bound to do that which he considers inexpedient. It being the most obvious of truths that every one must judge of expediency for himself, no Egoist can logically deny that every organism has the right to act as it thinks best, so far as its might will allow. Might is the measure of right everywhere and always, until, by contract, each contracting party voluntarily agrees to measure his right thenceforth, not by his might, but by the equal liberty of those whom he has contracted to protect. So here we are, back again to the *régime* of contract; and, as Mr. Lloyd is logical enough to perceive that, if contract determines rights, my position regarding parents and children is invulnerable, I have no further quarrel with him, unless he shall take issue with what I have said above.

Nevertheless, before ending with him, I will consider briefly certain other features of his letter. His analogy between the cripple and the child sustains rather than overthrows me, for his cripple makes a contract, and I as strenuously defend the liberty of the child in whom the idea of contract has dawned as I declare the slavery of the child to whom contract is not yet possible. All his remarks about the child as a dependent individual apply only to what I call the self-emancipated child. He attributes to his dependent individual the right of secession. What is secession, I should like to know, if not self-emancipation? The very idea of secession implies some conception of contract, however crude. Nothing that Mr. Lloyd says meets the case of the real infant.

Just for fun,—though it is apart from the issue,—I note Mr. Lloyd's ridiculous distinctions in regard to his contract with the cripple. He thinks he may say what the cripple shall eat, *because* he supplies his food, and may say what he shall wear, *because* he dresses him. This distinction is not intrinsic. The nature of the cripple's obligations to Mr. Lloyd depends entirely on the terms of the contract. The contract might provide that Mr. Lloyd may say what the cripple shall wear, because he supplies his food, and may say what he shall eat, because he dresses him. The distinction which Mr. Lloyd draws reminds me forcibly of the foolish doctrine that physical force must be met with physical force, and moral force with moral force. Of course, there is no reason at all for this. There is, to be sure, an excellent reason for using moral force as much as possible and physical force as little as possible. It would be an excellent thing to meet all kinds of force with moral force, if we could successfully do so. But moral force often fails, and, as the failures generally occur when it is used against physical force, it then becomes necessary to resort to physical force. That is the whole of it. The idea that there is intrinsic propriety in meeting force with another force like it in kind is purely fanciful. Merely verbal similarities often lead us to assume fitnesses that have no real existence. This tendency is revealed in Mr. Lloyd's contract with the cripple. The implication seems to be that it would be illegitimate for the cripple to undertake to dress to Mr. Lloyd's liking in return for an undertaking on the part of Mr. Lloyd to supply the cripple with such food as the cripple may desire. The mental disposition which impels a man to dictate to others their duty in the nature of things, may very naturally impel him to prescribe the forms of contract into which others may enter.

Mr. Lloyd tells us that, when his views prevail, parents, when begetting a child, will know that they are not producing property. Yes; and, when communism prevails, farmers, when planting potatoes, will know that they are not producing property. Yet this does not seem to be an imperative reason for excluding potatoes from the property sphere.

He further tells us that "the parent, having forced dependent life upon the child, is an invader, if refusing support to this dependent individual." He might have added with as much force that the stock-breeder, having forced dependent life upon a calf, is an invader, if refusing support to it. Yet I can hardly suppose that Mr. Lloyd, who is so fond of killing birds, would refuse to let the stock-breeder kill his calf. Moreover, he is guilty here of flagrant contradiction. If the parent absolutely *owes* support to the child because of forcing life upon it, then the child owes nothing to the parent in return for its support. But Mr. Lloyd has previously said that, in return for its support, the child owes it to the parent to consent to follow the parent's command as to what it shall eat and wear. If the man who utters these two propositions in the same breath is not a mental suicide, what is he?

And again: "That a child is property is absurd. If property, then a slave. A doctrine that establishes slavery in Anarchy is certainly sufficiently reduced to an absurdity." Slavery in Anarchy an absurdity! Will not the animals be slaves under Anarchy? Wherein does the undeveloped child differ from the animals? In its possibilities, does Mr. Lloyd answer? But the ovum in a woman's body has the same possibilities. Is it not her property? Slavery in Anarchy, instead of an absurdity, is a necessity. Property in any living creature means slavery in the ordinary sense. If, however, we take Colonel Greene's metaphorical, but much more rational, definition of slavery, then there can be no slavery in Anarchy, even though infants are property. "What is it to be a slave?" asks Colonel Greene. And he answers: "It is to see the Blazing Star and not be permitted to follow it." Now, Anarchy will recognize no property in any being that can see, even dimly, the Blazing Star. But a baby has not the faintest glimpse of the Blaz-

ing Star, and, therefore, in the more philosophic sense of the term, property in babies is not slavery.

But Mr. Lloyd argues further that, if his child is his property at birth, it is his property forever, or until he sells it or gives it away. And Mr. Matter, making the same point, declares: "My property cannot outgrow its condition." That a mother may sell or give away her child prior to its self-emancipation follows from my position beyond a doubt. I informed my critics in advance that I perceive the consequences of my doctrine and accept them all, and that, if they would refute me, they must do so by finding the flaw in my argument rather than by stating the corollaries of my conclusion. My warning, however, seems not to have had the slightest effect on them. And little wonder! It is so much easier to look horrified at a deduction which is startling because unusual than it is to find a defective link in a flawless logical chain!

But in their eagerness to point out dire and awful consequences my critics go too far. It does not follow from my doctrine, and it is not true, that property cannot outgrow its condition. If the theory of evolution be true, things and beings similar to those which constitute property today have, in the course of ages and by a process of development, resulted in the beings who are today proprietors. I suppose that Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Matter will not deny that the organ-grinder owns his monkey and his monkey's offspring, and can give monkey and offspring to his son. It is possible, then, that for generations and centuries and aeons this monkey's descendants may be handed down as the property of this organ-grinder's descendants. But, if the organ-grinder is himself the descendant of another branch of the monkey family (as is now generally believed), then it is not impossible that the descendants of the monkey which he owns will, some millions of years hence, have developed to such a degree that they will insist on grinding organs for themselves. In that case what will have become of the organ-grinder's property? Obviously it will have outgrown its condition. It will have passed from the category of the owned into the category of the owners. And similarly every normal child outgrows its property status. It cannot be laid down as an absolute law that what is once property is always property.

Moreover, this doctrine, which Mr. Matter insists upon so emphatically at the end of his letter, is flatly contradictory of the position which he takes at the beginning of his letter. I quote his words: "The nation recognized the black man as property, and he was. Later they agreed that he was not, and he was not." This being so, how can it also be true that "what I own once is always mine, unless I sell it"? Yet both of these assertions are made by Mr. Matter in the same letter. Perhaps he will answer that his meaning is that property can be unmade only by the power that made it, and not by any growth or act of its own. But such an answer will not hold, for Mr. Matter will have to admit that the black men would as truly have ceased to be property if they themselves, in spite of the nation, had risen in successful rebellion. Nor can he deny that, if the natural emancipation of children by development should not be recognized, the children themselves would ultimately compel its recognition, and would thus cease to be property,—to say nothing of the further fact that, even though they did not compel recognition of their liberty, they would sooner or later be freed from their property status by the mortality of their proprietors, who could bequeath their children only to the children themselves. And in this connection I again make the point that no Anarchist will deny a mother's right to commit suicide during pregnancy. To admit this is to declare her the owner of the child in her womb. But, according to Mr. Matter and Mr. Lloyd, if the child is once her property, then it is always her property,—a conclusion which carries these gentlemen even further than I ask them to go. All these considerations combine to expose the ridiculous weakness of the reasoning that, if a child is once property, it must be property as long as it lives.

I cannot take Mr. Matter seriously when he pretends that I have asked him or any one to disprove that children are *actually* property. He has no ground for supposing me to be so ignorant of the institutions under which I live as to believe that existing law recognizes property in children. It must be perfectly clear to any reader who is familiar with the way in which the English language is used that my declaration that children are property was intended to be understood simply as a declaration that children will be property after a scientific understanding of what ought to be recognized as property has been reached. It was not in my thought to propose a discussion on any other question than that framed by Mr. Matter himself: "Shall we consider children property or not?"

But I cannot agree with Mr. Matter that this question is one to be answered in an arbitrary fashion. The manner in which he writes of it leaves on me the impression that he denies any property principle, any rational test of property, and holds that we are to adjudge this to be property and that not to be property in a more or less hap-hazard manner, or, at best, in obedience to our whims or inclinations or sympathies. I, on the other hand, hold that the defensive social contract should be made for a specific purpose,—namely, to secure the contracting parties in the control of their persons and of the results of their efforts; that the security of each contracting individual is best to be attained by making the contract as universal as its nature will permit; that therefore an invitation to join in the contract should be extended to all persons capable of entertaining the idea of contract; that this invitation should be a standing one; and that the entire universe, exclusive of the parties to the contract and those who are qualified to become parties to it, should be considered appropriable by these actual and possible contractors, for their enjoyment and the expenditure of their productive efforts. This seems to me a rational and scientific, as opposed to an emotional or whimsical, determination of the domain of property, and I offer it as my main answer to the attitude assumed by Mr. Matter, supplementing it with a short examination of his separate criticisms.

He is wrong in supposing that I would have allowed the slave-owner to retain the negro infants at the time of the emancipation of the slaves. The fact that the slave-owner bought them would not weigh with me, unless the first sale of them was originally made by their rightful owners, their mothers; and such, of course, was not the case. I would have restored these infants to their mothers wherever possible. I accept, too, the argument that by a parity of reasoning the slaves were entitled to their other creations,—namely, their clothes and the plantations. I would have awarded them these also, and, it appearing that Mr. Matter would not have done so, it is my turn to be surprised.

The question: "Why not follow the line of least resistance?" indicates an entire misapprehension of the law governing that matter. Evidently Mr. Matter thinks that one may follow the line of least resistance, or not, as he chooses. Of course, the fact is that every one does follow the line of least resistance, and cannot do otherwise. I find the path of least resistance in the effort to discover and expound sociological truth rather than in the attempt to conciliate public opinion. I do not busy myself with public opinion at all.

"The man who demands equal freedom demands it at once for the whole human family, regardless of age, color, or sex." I could as truly say that the man who demands equal freedom demands it at once for every living creature, regardless of age, color, sex, structure, nature, or habits. If I deny equal freedom in drawing the line at children, Mr. Matter denies it in drawing the line at animals. The phrase "equal freedom" means nothing in itself. It must always be so qualified, either expressly or tacitly, as to show for whom equality of freedom is demanded. Any qualification of this kind will show a limit somewhere. The issue, as stated in a foregoing paragraph, is whether my limit is more or less rational than Mr. Matter's.

"When we, as Anarchists, grant each other the right to live, to be free from physical injuries inflicted by invaders, why can we not also grant it to children?" This begs the question. I deny the possibility of invading the undeveloped child. The outsider who uses force upon the child invades, not the child, but its mother, and may rightfully be punished for so doing. The mother who uses force upon her child invades nobody. If Mr. Matter means to ask why we should not secure children against maternal force, I answer that we should not because to do so would be exactly contrary to the purpose of the defensive contract, which is to secure all persons contracting, or qualified to contract, in the control of the results of their efforts.

"Neither society or the father has the right to inflict physical pain on any human beings." If this be true, then it is certain that society has no right to physically punish a cruel mother. I point this out simply as one of Mr. Matter's inconsistencies, not endorsing the proposition myself.

"If a child wishes to leave its parents at any age, let it go." So say I. The child that wishes to leave its parents in any more deliberate sense than that of obeying an instinct to flee from an impending blow is necessarily a child capable of entertaining the idea of contract.

[Continued on page 8.]

Dollars from the Fools.

Dollars from the fools,—that's the only racket now.
—Benj. R. Tucker.

The preacher from his pulpit drones a lot of curious things
About thrones and harps and golden crowns and angels with white wings.
To some, it seems, this baby talk is satisfactory;
To others 'tis the spume that blows across a windy sea;
But method in the madness of his words I must allow,
For 'tis dollars from the fools,—that's the only racket now.

The great and mighty editor sits smiling and serene,
About his mild and mocking eyes a mystic light, I ween.
Callous and capable is he, as, poised upon a stool,
He dashes off his leaders, bound by a single rule:
To say the least in the most words,—a simple trick, I swow!
But 'tis dollars from the fools,—that's the only racket now.

But the lawyer politician makes the most successful run;
He has, of all the pirate caste, the funniest kind of fun.
He bobs his puppets up and down, and twists them every way,
And never seems to weary of the fascinating play.
There's work in every jackass, and there's milk in every cow,
And 'tis dollars from the fools,—that's the only racket now.

They march in grand procession; the lawyer rides ahead;
The pensioner, the pauper, and the host by Labor fed;
The thief, the cheat, the quack, the beat, the lazy diplomat,
The tariff, railroad, silver king, the goldbug sleek and fat.
Ah! when the bow is bent too broad, the thing will crack somehow,
But 'tis dollars from the fools,—that's the only racket now.

William Walstein Gordak.

Voluntary Socialism and Taxation.

To the Editor of Liberty:

I have just read Mr. Yarros's courteous review, in your paper, of an article of mine upon "Voluntary Socialism." Mr. Yarros considers the name and argument of my article a contradiction in terms. Very well; but let us see Mr. Yarros's *proof*. He has a right to assert what he pleases, but let us see how he proves his point. He argues that my plan for action by government is not voluntary, because government can get the capital to carry on these industries "in one way only,—by taxing all citizens,"—I quote Mr. Yarros's words,—and that therefore some will have to pay for what they do not desire to support.

This shows the weak spot in Mr. Yarros's and, I think, in all Philosophical Anarchists' arguments. Their reasoning is strong, but the trouble is with their premises. Mr. Yarros argues: "All cities, in order to carry on industry, must tax. Taxation is not voluntary. Therefore no city industry can be voluntary."

But, if Mr. Yarros studied theory less and facts more, he would know that much industry is carried on by cities without taxation.

Glasgow makes two million dollars annually by its municipal activities in connection with the Clyde. Birmingham has recently attempted very large municipal undertakings without raising the tax rate one farthing. A city can borrow the capital of those willing and glad to lend it, and conduct industry, and out of the profits pay both the interest and the principal without raising taxes at all. This is happening today in Birmingham, Glasgow, Liverpool, Huddersfield, Berlin, London, Paris, and many smaller cities.

I do not use these cities as examples of voluntary Socialism. I use them to prove that Mr. Yarros's premise is utterly mistaken, and therefore his logical result is overthrown.

This is my criticism on all your Philosophical Anarchism. You are very strong in logic, but you start from unproved and sometimes mistaken premises. You argue: "The State is the embodiment of the invasive principle. Invasion is the opposite of liberty. Therefore liberty cannot come through the State." Your logic, starting from your premise, is perfect, but your premise is at fault. You take what you wish to prove for granted. *If* the State is what you define it, certainly let us all be Anarchists; but that is just the question.

Now, I am perfectly well aware—who is not?—that the State has usually been invasive; but does that prove that it always must be? Until within a century electricity could be shown by universal experience—so men thought—to be harmful. Does it follow that it is our duty to oppose its use today? No; it is a great force, and man has learned to tame and use it. Anarchists admit that the State is a great force. They fill books with a catalogue of its evil powers. But society today is showing how we may, not throw away that force, but use it for liberty. Undoubtedly it will be a slow process, but all great good comes slowly. The State, first absolutely tyrannical, is today less so; to-morrow will be still less tyrannical; and by and by will become voluntary. You do not believe it. Perhaps not; that is a matter of rightly reading the signs of the times; but Mr. Yarros has not proved my contention inconsistent. I have rather proven his logic to be weak in its foundation. Certainly the State *can* conduct industry without doing violence to the invasive principle. Whether it will or not is another question. I firmly believe that it will, and that the only path to individual freedom lies through the evolution of the State out of tyranny, through less tyranny, to freedom. Abolish the State in hope of freedom, and men will become the servants of and dependents upon the biggest bully or the shrewdest devil.

Yours for the truth,

W. D. P. Bliss.

Boston, Mass., August 9, 1895.

The Anarchist Child.

While I do not wish to take any prominent part in the discussion now going on among Anarchists as to the status of the child in free society, I would like to place my own views on the matter on record.

I do not think that Mr. Tucker's critics can successfully attack his position while admitting contract as the ethical basis of Anarchism. With so much conceded, the logic of his position seems hardly assailable. If the Anarchist's only obligation is to a contract, invasion outside of that contract is no crime, and what he owns he certainly owns absolutely and may do as he will with.

I only feel that I have a right to speak on this subject because I do not accept contract as the ethical basis of Anarchism in the first place, and, in the second, do not regard children as the property of anybody.

I agree with Mr. Tucker in that it is "only on egoistic and utilitarian grounds—that is, grounds of expediency—that I believe in equal liberty." With me, happiness is the first thing, and liberty a means to that end. I base my Anarchism on Natural Right; that is, I believe there are in the nature of things certain lines of conduct and relations of man to man which are, above all others, conducive to happiness in the individual and harmony in society,—which are, therefore, above all others, expedient. Anarchists, according to my definition, are people who regard equal liberty as the greatest of these naturally right human relations, and who therefore stand for its advocacy and defence. As a means to this end a contract may often be wisely used, but, whether used or not, *an Anarchist has no right to invade any individual.* Individuals I divide into two classes,—dependent and independent. An independent individual is one who supports himself, and who is therefore absolutely free from the dictation of others,—a perfect individual. The dependent individual cannot fully support himself; therefore he is rightfully subject, to a limited extent, to the direction and dictation of those who support him, and is an imperfect individual.

What is this "limited extent"? It is the liberty of the one who supports the dependent. For example: if in free society a cripple begs me to support him for charity's sake, as he cannot earn his own, he, if I accept, at once becomes subject to me. Because I supply his food, I have a right to say what he shall eat; because I dress him, I can say what he shall wear; because I pay his doctor's bills, I direct his hygienic habits; because I am reponsible, to some extent, for damages he may inflict, I control to that extent his conduct. I have a right to do all this; otherwise, I am his slave and he is my master. In short, my control over him is not that of an owner, but purely and altogether defensive.

Let it be observed that this dependent individual is not my property or my slave, even although his dependence may be the "product of my labor,"—that is, I may have broken his limbs, or staved in his skull, and so made him dependent; nor have I, according to the logic of my position, any right to invade him in any way, even if there be no contract between us; nor have I any right to prevent his seceding from my support at any time, either to the support of another or to become independent.

Now, then, I have no difficulty whatever about this child question, because I class the child as a dependent individual. The parent has the right of defensive control over the child, and no other. As the defence of equal liberty is the legitimate business of Anarchists, any Anarchist will have a right to defend an invaded child against its parent or any one else. And any child will have the right at any time to secede from any parent or guardian and adopt another or become independent altogether; at which moment the right of parental control, in the rejected parent, ceases.

Anarchist parents will know perfectly well what they do when they set about begetting a child. They will know they are not producing property, but another individual with the rights of an individual, and they will know their right relations to that individual. The child is not an invader by forcing his dependence upon the parent; but the parent, having forced dependent life upon the child, is an invader, if refusing support to this dependent individual.

That a child is property is absurd. If property, then a slave. A doctrine that establishes slavery in Anarchy is certainly sufficiently reduced to an absurdity, but this is not all. My property is mine, *always mine*. My child, if my property, is not only my slave now, but my slave for life; and not only my slave for life, but may be sold to another to be his slave, or may be willed to heirs and assigns.

This doctrine, carried out logically, poisons Anarchism to its fountain-head, and reaffirms government in its intensest and most detestable form.

J. Wm. Lloyd.

Are Children Property?

To the Editor of Liberty:

I have followed the discussion relating to the condition of children under equal freedom, and I am surprised at the different views adopted. The strangest of all, I must admit, is the one assumed by yourself,—that children are property to the same degree as a sack of potatoes. Your challenge to your readers to disprove this is absurd; it is like asking any one to disprove the existence of a god or of several gods.

Today vacant land is property in the eyes of the great majority; they might ask you to prove that it is not property, and all you could answer is that it ought not to be. But it is, nevertheless. The question can be asked: Is scenery or sunlight property, or, again, are wild beasts property? They are if the would-be proprietor can convince society that they are, and if he is able to capture them.

The question as to whether children are property or not is simply: "Shall we consider them property or not?" A similar question was once solved regarding the negro. The nation recognized the black man as property, and he was. Later they agreed that he was not, and he was not.

A slave-owner could legally sell any child born of his black slaves, but not the child of a white woman, even though he were its father. The black child was property; the other was not, since the father could not dispose of it as he pleased. I suppose you would have allowed the slave-owner to keep the little ones when the adults were declared free; he bought them from their former owners, and, being property, could have no rights. The parents could not claim them any more than their clothes; else, under the same claim, they could demand the whole plantation. It was

through their efforts that the plantation existed, and perhaps was created.

Rather than unnecessarily antagonize public opinion in trying to create the idea of recognizing children as property, why not follow the line of least resistance? The man who demands equal freedom demands it at once for the whole human family, regardless of age, color, or sex. When we, as Anarchists, grant each other the right to live, to be free from physical injuries inflicted by invaders (whether our parents or not), why can we not also grant it to children, leaving it to all concerned to look after those rights to the best of their ability? If an able-bodied man in good comfortable conditions should neglect to see to his protection and be physically assailed, some one might out of sympathy defend him, although there is no other reason why he should; but he would be most evidently exercising his equal freedom in doing so. I do not think any one would punish him for defending the victim out of pure sympathy (unless it were you, as you have no leaning towards that quality); and, if those rights were given to children, men and women would always be found who would protect them *gratis*. Should they go too far in this, a jury of their peers can decide it, as would be the case were the victim an adult.

This is far from saying that the State or society has more right than the father, but it simply means that neither has the right to inflict physical pain on any human beings.

If no one is found willing to protect a victimized child, it will have to take its medicine. But there will always be people kind-hearted enough to defend those unable to do so themselves, owing to physical disability and unability to pay for protection, and children belong in this class.

If a child wishes to leave its parents at any age, let it go; and, if someone is willing to take it up, he may do so and prevent its father from forcibly taking possession of it. A child is under no obligation to receive blows from its parents, any more than is an adult; and, if parents wish to keep their child, they will not abuse it.

By recognizing a child's rights to life and physical safety we have the means of preventing the torturing and killing of an infant. I have no doubt that kind people would subscribe money for the protection and care of such children, as they do now for invalids.

But the greatest objection I find to making children property is this. A father, belonging to a protective association, in cold blood or in a fury attempts to murder his child; another man comes upon the scene, and, carried away by his feelings, kills the aggressor in defending the child. Now, to be consistent, you must convict this man of murder in the first degree, because he had no right whatever to prevent that man from destroying his property. It will take many years of your human flesh property propaganda to find a jury capable of rendering such a verdict, if ever one is found.

No, children are not property like a sack of potatoes; no one ever heard of a man risking his life in a raging torrent, or in fire, to save a sack of those vegetables, even were they his own. But we often see strangers endanger their existence for human beings of *all ages*.

I would like to ask you one question. Would you object, under equal freedom, to the organization of a society to protect, free of charge, the persons and property of those not able to, or even not willing to? And, if you find no fault with such a society, why should it not also protect children? Are you able to decide at what age or condition they are entitled to the protection and are no longer property? Should a child be an idiot or a cripple, unable to take care of itself, it must forever remain property. Moreover, if you base your title to the property on the peculiar method of its creation, I cannot see how the title is ever lost. What I own once is always mine, unless I sell it. My property cannot outgrow its condition; else, it is no longer complete property.

I think I have shown, not that children are not property, but that it is not necessary or wise to consider them as such, and that it is impossible to bring the human family to ever look upon them as they would upon a sack of potatoes.

A. S. Matter.

Cincinnati, O., September 2, 1895.

On the Status of the Child.

To the Editor of Liberty:

The sympathies extend the liberties. Notwithstanding that many people take such shortsighted means for the satisfaction of their feelings that they aggravate the distress they would relieve, still the most reasonable and well-thought-out plans for relief—those directed chiefly to negative oppression and accidents, leaving the individual as much as possible to his own resources to meet distress brought on himself by himself—find their justification in that they satisfy the sympathetic feelings. Without these latter stimuli, the best plans, no more than the worst, would be pushed forward. No one with any degree of fellow-feeling would claim freedom (immunity from invasion) for himself without granting the same freedom to others. A man must be callous indeed who, on principle, refused to aid anyone against tyrants; and, if he forcibly prevented others from giving that aid which he would not give himself, he is an aggressor against mankind in general. We, as libertarians, claim for each person that he may use his judgment as to whom and to what extent he will help or refuse to help. We claim this as our plea for liberty,—that only aggressions are to be antagonized by force.

These elementary reflections, which (in part at least) you say I have "no occasion to discuss" with you, are nevertheless brought to the fore by your remarks in Liberty (Nos. 316 and 319); for it is a question whose doctrines regarding the status of children, yours and "H.'s," or mine, are most consonant with the idea and requirement of liberty.

In your article you state: "As long as children are unable to make contracts, I know of no reason why they should not be 'put on a par with property,' especially if putting them on a par with property tends on the whole to lessen their suffering, and if there is no method of dealing with them that does not virtually put them on a par with property." In this sentence you state that you have in view the lessening of children's suffering, but "H.," in "Egoism," gave no signs of that extent of feeling. You, nevertheless, leave me in the dark as to how you consider a property-status for children can conduce to their welfare. And, in the absence af any qualifying phrases in your articles, I can only infer that the property-status contemplated by you is absolute, or as absolute as "H." would have it, which is ninety-nine per cent. of absolutism. And you say you have joined "H." "bag and baggage."

Then I reply that, as the absolute property status of children means their total and unconditional enslavement to their parents or other owners, with the denial of their claims to any outside assistance against owners' tyranny, and the forcible prevention of outsiders from giving assistance and succor, however much the child may be tortured, meaning also a stop put to the spread of sympathetic feeling and consequently to the extension of liberty, while men's brutal feelings are allowed material upon which their brutality may be cultivated, the "par with property" status of children appears to be a invention of the devil. The czar of Russia, I believe, puts all his subjects on a par with property. This human property idea is, in fact, *the idea* with all potentates, and is really the one thing that our liberty propaganda *was* intended to abolish.

If, Mr. Editor, you had proclaimed that liberty was only for your own class, or only for adult males, or only for those between sixteen and sixty years of age, leaving the second childhood of man to be enslaved like the first, you would have paralleled your utterances drawing the line of liberty *against* those who have not passed their childhood as shown by their being "unable to make contracts." As if their ability or non-ability to make contracts had anything more to do with their rightful enslavement or emancipation, or with the expediency of protecting them from ill-treatment, than their ability to smoke had.

Seeing that childhood and manhood (or womanhood) are but stages to the life history of the same animal,—which stages might, to please classifiers, be extended to a round dozen, according as the individual has or has not left off sucking, going to school, growing a beard, courting, earning money, marrying, or passing into his dotage (and, be it remembered, in certain States, most of these stages do affect the individual's political status),—seeing that the immature and more or less dependent boy develops *gradually* into the mature and more or less independent man, any sharp line that society draws between the status of the child and that of the adult must be arbitrary in proportion to its sharpness.

The arbitrariness of the line may be of little import for expediting small matters, like the collection of taxes or votes, or even for fixing individual responsibility for debt; but, when the line of demarcation is used to determine *between the two extremes of slavery and liberty*, the *entire* status of the individual, the sacrifice of common sense and all the requirements of individual growth and development to a mere rule is flagrant.

Why it can be of any importance to divide "the material with which the sociologist deals into two classes,—owners and owned," as you do, I have not the remotest idea. Anyway, the physical continuity of the human "material" under such a division, first as *owned* and then as *owner*, is a fact that protests against the arrangement, as it does also against any other that may cause an arrest of the orderly growth of the child to maturity.

I suppose we both agree that parents are the natural guardians of their offspring, at least while they treat the latter with a fair amount of guardianship. But *guardian* is not synonymous with *owner*, and, while *guardianship* is necessary for the child,—varying in quantity with the child's development,—*ownership* is quite an intrusion, as it is in all slavery.

Parents are *not* producers of their children in the same sense that they may consider themselves the producers of their handiwork or brain-work. The evolution of all the complex tissues and endowments of the child goes on so independently of the parents' will that "H.'s" "having produced my child myself" is grotesque in its impudence. Of course, if ownership rights are granted, as "H." would grant them, these rights would be salable, and a class of child-slaves and slave-markets would follow as a matter of course. How nice for the children!

But the whole idea is obnoxious and unworkable, except at the cost of stunted feelings. No one can be expected to discriminate between an act of cruelty committed upon a child and a similar act committed upon one who is not a child, and to check his spontaneous help to the injured one if he finds it to be under age. Such a discrimination is too much against present development of human nature to bear a moment's countenance. To discriminate in this matter *against* the child—the weakest—is only possible by the most callous or the most cowardly. It is dead against our instincts, and a system based upon this discrimination would depend upon a creed or a government for its workableness.

That parents with the best intentions act sometimes detrimentally to their child's welfare is met by the retort that so would any other guardians that might be appointed. All being fallible, and parents' needs being generally met in satisfying their children's needs, there is no necessity for establishing a special status for children.

Absolute ownership being ruled out as irrelevant, your question: "Who shall own him (the child)—the parent or the community?" does not catch hold of yours truly, *at all*. The intruder who interferes to prevent a man knocking either his wife or his brother or his child about does not assume ownership of the individual he protects from violence. The displacement of a cruel *guardian* by a lenient one is justified by the cruelty. And cruelty is the same whether inflicted on child or adult, and whether perpetrated by parent or by strangers.

You tell me that the articles by "G.," to which I referred, went counter to equal liberty, while that of "H." affirmed equal liberty. As for these differences, they depend entirely upon your limit of all liberty to the equal liberty of adults. As I don't take your position, those differences appear to me trivial beside the *agreement in spirit* of the writings of both "G." and "H." Both "G." and "H." claimed that parents had the right, under the equal liberty they favored, of treating their children as cruelly as they pleased, and outsiders mustn't interfere to stop such conduct. Both being equally callous, both excite my antipathy. And even yourself, Mr. T., on March 18, 1893, wrote: "If 'G.'s' articles had appeared in any other journal than 'Egoism' they would have made me boiling

mad, for the sentiments which they proclaim are literally revolting; in fact, I have never seen anything more so." It was the *sentiment* displayed that caused you to pen that. And my only wonder is that the same revolting sentiments shown by "H." are now overlooked by you. Whether "G.'s" or "H.'s" logic is the best is not the only point of importance to consider. There is a possibility of sacrificing one's heart to what should do duty as the head.

You say you apply the "equal liberty idea to every sphere of life, including the relations of parents to children," etc. And yet, in these relations, you are anxious to give *all* the liberty to the parents and *none* to the children! What *equal* liberty! What impartiality!

The creed is essential to the life, say you. Then how comes it about that you have no creed to protect the child's life? Creed may be a help in transitional states of development; but, inasmuch as our best actions—those that give pleasure to ourselves and to others and are performed spontaneously—are not forced in obedience to creed, I don't see where creed comes in there. It is because *I recognize* "that this is an imperfect world," and recognizing that between our august selves and babies, and savages, and criminals, and lunatics, there is a wide gap,—although the missing links are numerous enough,—I say that, although we cannot live on free contract terms with these inferiors, it shows a great want of the spirit of liberty and toleration in anyone who would deny the said inferiors a limited liberty. And, when the spirit goes, the form is likely to go also. "Egoism's" position regarding children is a good case in point. As for "Egoism's" being a journal that "favors the very measures which" I and you endorse, it is sufficiently obvious from this discussion that we take opposite measures in our treatment of children.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN BADCOCK, JR.

ST. BRELADE'S, LEYTON, ENGLAND, AUGUST 29, 1895.

Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps.

The Secretary wants every reader of Liberty to send in his name for enrolment. Those who do so thereby pledge themselves to write, when possible, a letter every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned in Liberty for that fortnight, and to notify the secretary promptly in case of any failure to write to a target (which it is hoped will not often occur), or in case of temporary or permanent withdrawal from the work of the Corps. All, whether members or not, are asked to lose no opportunity of informing the secretary of suitable targets. Address, STEPHEN T. BYINGTON, Flushing Institute, Flushing, N. Y.

Note change of secretary's address.

Once in a while, though not often,—not as often, I think, as those who are engaged in some other lines of reform,—I hear the complaint that "abusive" letters have been written to targets. Remember that strong language often produces a good effect when your readers are more or less in sympathy with you; but, when they are altogether out of sympathy, it is likely to seem ridiculous. You are not likely to win any one by showing contempt for third persons, unless you have, at least, first convinced him that you are far enough above these persons to be entitled to your contempt. And even then the attitude of contempt is one in which very few can appear dignified.

I would not for a moment deny that our opponents constantly deserve vigorous and contemptuous denunciation, and that such language has its practical use in making our condemnation of their attitude conspicuous and emphatic. But it is almost always ridiculous to the unsympathetic, and often undignified even to the sympathetic; and I believe that these disadvantages will, except in rare cases, outweigh its advantages in writing for a predominantly unsympathetic audience.

Target, section A.—Rev. C. F. Bradley, Quincy, Ill., is described as "much interested in social problems, intensely anti-Socialistic, a consistent, zealous evolutionist." Show him how the denial of freedom of individual development is fundamental in the institution of government as it exists.

Section B.—The "Advocate," Provincetown, Mass., published recently a letter signed "Collector," urging all patriots to pay their taxes cheerfully and promptly, without growling to the collector. On September 3 a reply appeared, signed "Taxpayer," giving reasons against compulsory taxation, and comparing it to the old system of compulsory contribution for the support of the church. The writer declares that institutions supported by compulsory taxation can never rightly be called "free." Back him up by showing the unreasonableness and harmfulness of compulsory taxation, and the practicalness of voluntary taxation. STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

What is Property?

[Continued from page 5.]

This consideration has no bearing upon the status of the infant.

"A child is under no obligation to receive blows from its parents." Who has denied it?

"By recognizing a child's right to life and physical safety we have the means of preventing the torturing and killing of an infant." Are you sure, Mr. Matter? We recognize, do we not, an adult's rights to life and physical safety? Do we succeed thereby in preventing murder? Possibly we lessen the number of murders, though even that is not certain. I have seen it plausibly argued that our laws against murder increase the number of murders. However, I am not opposing the punishment of murderers. I simply wish to point out that it does not follow that children are better treated because not considered the property of their mothers. Personally, I think they would be better treated were they so considered. But, if the reverse were the case, it would not follow that it is the part of wisdom to deny property in children, any more than it would be expedient to abolish property in horses if cruelty to horses could thereby be lessened. Cruelty either to horses or to children is a very deplorable thing, but a certain degree of it is preferable to some other things that pretty surely result from *unprincipled* legislation.

In answer to another correspondent I dealt in the last issue of Liberty with the argument now advanced by Mr. Matter regarding the treatment to be administered to the individual who invades a cruel parent. Mr. Matter tells me that, to be consistent, I must convict of murder in the first degree a man who kills a father in the act of killing his child. Very well; I promise that, if I am ever on a jury in such a case, I will be consistent. I promise also to show such degree of leniency in fixing the punishment as the circumstances seem to require. Mr. Matter thinks it will take many years to find a jury constituted of men like myself. For once Mr. Matter is right. It will also take many years to establish Anarchism.

"No one ever heard of a man risking his life to save a sack of potatoes." I do not know whether this is true or not. At any rate, many a man, in a burning building, has foolishly risked and lost his life in an attempt to save his hat. But let us admit Mr. Matter's statement. Even if true, it has no pertinence. If I had said that children and potatoes are equally valuable property, then the statement of Mr. Matter would have some force. But I have said nothing of the kind. My contention is a very different one,—namely, that children should be considered property, just as potatoes are considered property.

"Would you object, under equal freedom, to the organization of a society to protect, free of charge, the persons and property of those not able to, or even not willing to" [protect themselves, I suppose Mr. Matter means]? No, provided such persons understand what a contract is.

"If you find no fault with such a society, why should it not also protect children?" There is no reason why it should not protect children who understand what a contract is. It should not protect children who do not understand what a contract is, because in so doing it would deny the right of mothers to control property legitimately acquired in the domain identified above as the domain of property.

"Are you able to decide at what age or condition children are no longer property?" As well as Mr. Matter is able to decide at what age or condition a child may buy or sell a house. The age varies according to precocity. The matter is one for the jury in any given case of complaint.

"Should a child be an idiot or a cripple, it must forever remain property." No. If an idiot, it must remain property until its owner abandons it. If a merely physical cripple, its property status does not differ from that of a normal child.

So much for Mr. Matter. And now that I am ready to confront my irate English comrade, I find myself at the limit of my time and space. Mr. Badcock must wait until the next issue of Liberty. And I must ask my critics to refrain from writing further until my next article has appeared. T.

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